



July 2001

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**James G. Roche**

***TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE:***

I was recently sworn in as your 20<sup>th</sup> secretary of the Air Force and became, on that day, a proud member of a magnificent team of active duty airmen, guardsmen, reservists, and civilian employees. You have earned the admiration of our nation, the respect of the world, and the promise of a bright future. I already can tell you that you should be enormously proud of your achievements, from combat operations over Iraq and the Balkans to your recent validation of the Expeditionary Aerospace Force concept. In the realm of aerospace power, you fly the best, train the best, and maintain the best. As you put it: “No One Comes Close.”

We must now turn our focus to the journey ahead, and be responsive to this new century’s emerging security environment. I look forward to piloting that journey with you. My focus is on developing new strategies for military aerospace power in this new millennium; improving Air Force retention, professional education and leadership and development; eliminating the inefficiencies in how we do our business; and developing our acquisition policies and processes to ensure innovation and competitive vibrancy within our defense industrial base over the long haul. My vision is an aerospace future just as remarkable as your admired past: undeniable and global reconnaissance and strike superiority. My pledge to you is that I will serve the way you do ever day, worldwide — with integrity, selflessness and in earnest pursuit of excellence.

In 1963, President Kennedy said of military service: “I can imagine no more rewarding career. And any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile, I think can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction: ‘I served in the United States Navy.’” That sentiment rings very true for me. As you know, I am deeply proud of my Navy career. But, today we are in a new century, with new opportunities, new challenges, new capabilities, and vastly different threats to the security of our great nation. In this century, men and women can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction: “I serve in the United States Air Force.” And now, I am proud to be able to say that too.

Signed

*James G. Roche*